

The Sharecroppers' Voice

"The Voice of the Disinherited"

OFFICIAL ORGAN SOUTHERN TENANT FARMER'S UNION

Vol. 1, No. 9

Dec. 1935

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NATIONAL CONVENTION S.T.F.U. LITTLE ROCK, JAN. 3, 4 5

UNION ADOPTS FORM OF MODEL CONTRACT

Sharecroppers Rights Protected In Proposed Agreement

The Executive Council at its meeting on Dec. 1st, approved a Model Contract for sharecroppers and tenants. This contract was drafted by a special committee and put in legal form by our attorneys.

It embodies certain conditions which thru custom and usage have grown up thru the years. Such agreements between landlords and tenants have in the past been made orally. In approving this contract members of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union have made every effort to adopt something fair and reasonable which is in line with our program and policy.

The Southern Tenant Farmers Union will stand behind this contract and will see that its provisions are carried out to the letter by both landlords and their workers. Landlords who have any intention of dealing fairly and justly with their labor should not hesitate to make this written agreement.

The Executive Council expressed its determination to see that all members of the Union who make crops next year under this contract live up to their agreements, as embodied in the contract. Several attorneys have thoroughly studied the contract and state that it will stand in all courts of the Southern States.

SHARECROP CONTRACT

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS: That as the owner or operator of the Farm or Plantation situated in County, has this day employed to cultivate acres more or less of land, same being a part of said farm or plantation before mentioned; the said to furnish all labor (and stock and tools if 3rd. & 4th. worker) necessary for the cultivation and harvesting of said crop, receiving as compensation for his said labor one-half of all crops produced upon the land. (Provision: 3rd. & 4th. worker receiving as compensation for his labor and use of his tools and stock, three fourths of the cotton and seed, and two thirds of other farm products grown on said land).

The said agrees to cooperate with the said by furnishing him in cash \$....., said sum to be advanced in equal installments of \$..... each, the first installment to be paid or advanced on day specified and one additional installment on of each succeeding month until all installments have been so advanced.

The said agrees to cultivate said crop in a proper manner, furnishing all necessary labor, (stock and tools, if 3rd and 4th worker) for the cultivation and harvesting of same, to haul all cotton to the gin and to deliver same after ginning to the said who shall receive same on behalf of himself and the said said cotton to be sold at a fair market price, said price being agreeable to the said before any sale shall be consummated.

It is further agreed that the said will furnish the said with an itemized statement showing all indebtedness against said crop within thirty days after the last advance

Greet the Sharecroppers

The Second Annual Convention of the S.T.F.U. is to be held January 3rd, 4th and 5th in Little Rock, Ark. The editors of the Sharecroppers' Voice plan to run a Convention number of the paper which will be off the press by the time the Convention assembles. Will you be one to send a greeting to the sharecroppers through their paper? One line with your name and address will cost \$1.00, three lines \$2.50, eight lines \$5.00, larger sizes in proportion. Send in your greeting early, write anything you wish to say, and it will be printed along with your name and address. If you do not wish your name printed, we will of course respect your wishes. All funds not used in preparation of this number will be used to pay Convention expenses. Donations other than the above will be greatly appreciated. Make them as large as you can.

and further that after said crop has been sold to make prompt settlement with the said in cash for his one half interest, (if 3rd. & 4th. worker) (his interest being $\frac{3}{4}$ of the cotton and seed and $\frac{2}{3}$ of other farm products) after deducting the amount of indebtedness with legal interest thereon.

It is further agreed that the said specifically reserves unto himself all benefits and rights under the AAA or any other government or state agency that may be established and the said agrees to promptly advise the said of his acreage allotment and the amount of tax exempt cotton allowed as soon as said allotment has been fixed by the proper authority.

WITNESS THE HANDS of the parties on this the day of 1936.

A number of Landlords of the better ele-

Continued on Page 3

Second Annual Meeting To Be Held In Labor Temple

The Executive Council of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union meeting at Trumann, Arkansas, Sunday, Dec. 1st, selected Little Rock, Ark. as the place for its second annual convention to assemble. An invitation to meet at the Labor Temple in Little Rock on those dates was accepted. Delegates from over two hundred locals, county and state organizations of the Union will be represented. Members of four races will meet to discuss their common problems at the capital city of Arkansas.

There will be representatives of the Mexican workers from Texas, Indian members of the Union from Oklahoma who belong to the Choctaw and Creek nations, as well as Negroes and whites from the Midsouth and Southwest. Temporary committees were selected to make plans for the Convention.

The Committee on Arrangements plans to invite several prominent citizens to address the assembly, including the Governor of Arkansas who was made an honorary member of the Union last spring. A motion picture accompanied by a lecture showing the TVA town of Norris, Tenn. and the Sharecroppers of the South will be shown. An effort to secure a motion picture of the new farming methods in Soviet Russia is to be made. The latter was taken by a colleague of Sherwood Eddy, noted lecturer and religious worker.

Locals of the Union will begin at once to select their most able men and women as delegates to the Convention, persons who can go back to their locals and report the proceedings to the membership. Funds to defray expenses of delegates will have to be raised. Arrangements to transport delegates to and from Little Rock must be made by each organization. Locals in organized Counties should arrange for the entire County delegation to go as a body. Everyone should arrive on time, whether he comes via a "side door pullman", freight train, hitchhiking, or by auto, truck or bus. Above all see that your credential blanks are returned to the Credentials Committee at the National Office as soon as an election of delegates is held.

National Executive Council News and Notes

Trumann, Ark. Dec. 1, 1935.

The National Executive Council of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union met today in the last quarterly session of 1935.

Practically all the members of the Council expressed the opinion that this meeting was the most interesting and successful of any meeting of the year.

Among several other matters, plans were made for establishing a National Defense Committee for the purpose of defending Union members, speakers and organizers against illegal arrest, false imprisonment or interference in any way with Union activities by planters and their henchmen who happen to hold positions as law enforcement officials. Funds will be raised to fight the legal battles of such victims, and to prosecute those guilty of such acts.

Preparations were made for the holding of the second annual convention of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. The Convention will be held in the Labor Temple at Little Rock, Ark. on the 3rd, 4th and 5th of January, 1936. Special sessions of the Convention will be given over to discussion

of women's and young people's activities within the Union.

A model contract for use of Sharecroppers and Tenants which had been prepared by attorneys for the Union was adopted.

Reports of organizers who have been working in Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas showed that more than 80 new locals have been organized during the last three months and that the Union had a membership of 25,000.

Howard A. Kester, who represented the S.T.F.U. at the last Convention of the A. F. of L. at Atlantic City, New Jersey, was present and reported that almost every person of any prominence in the A. F. of L. knew about and was favorably impressed with the work of the S. T. F. U. It was through the efforts of Kester, John Herling, Paul Porter and various leaders of the A. F. of L. that the Convention at Atlantic City unanimously adopted a resolution endorsing the S.T.F.U. The resolution called upon all labor bodies affiliated with the A. F. of L. to render all assistance possible in the Union's efforts to organize the down-trodden farm laborers of the South.

THE SHARECROPPER AND THE AAA

The results of two sets of questionnaires circulated among members of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union have just been tabulated. The effects of the AAA enforced reduction of cotton acreage among sharecroppers are shown.

In 1933 the cotton plow-up program shows that 32% of the croppers and tenants did not receive payment for plowing up their cotton. 4% received a partial payment. There were 309 replies to this question.

That portion of the AAA benefits which were supposed to be paid the sharecropper and tenant under the government contracts erroneously called a "parity payment" were not received at all by 36% of the men who replied to the questionnaire. This was in direct violation of the rules and regulations of the secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Henry A. Wallace. Unscrupulous landlords, encouraged by the failure of the AAA to enforce its contracts in respect to the sharecropper or tenant or to take any action whatever to protect THE REAL PRODUCERS OF COTTON, simply appropriated government money for their own use. These and similar cases are being laid before the Department of Justice. The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union is demanding that the United States Government prosecute these Planters for obtaining money under false pretenses.

In regard to Tax Exemption Certificates issued under the Bankhead Act, 77% of the sharecroppers and tenants who replied, stated that they were forced to allow their landlord to become Trustee or Guardian of the Bale Tags. All of these cases show that such trusteeships were obtained by fraud. The Bankhead Act provides that any landlord forcing tenants or croppers to allow him to become trustee of the bale tags shall be punished by a fine of \$1,000 and six months in jail. The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union has enough evidence to send a gang of Planters to the Federal penitentiary for the balance of their natural lives.

ORGANIZER BEATEN UP

One of our Negro Organizers was ganged by a band of white thugs on the streets of a little town near Pine Bluff. Our man was beaten severely. He was saved from death only by the intervention of a group of white Union members who happened to be passing by and heard his cry for help. Since this fearless organizer is still in danger of attack we will not publish his name until the next issue of the Voice. He is well known to all and we are demanding the arrest and punishment of his attackers.

RUMOR UNFOUNDED

The report of the killing in the Marion, Arkansas jail of one Rev. Darty, Negro minister, has been investigated by a reliable Union man, and we are glad to state that this rumor is unfounded. There was a case of a person who was beaten by officers and planters in Crittendon County and afterwards thrown into jail, but subsequently released. Even Crittendon County officials aren't likely to beat a man to death while held in their custody. They know that such action would be exposed by the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, and every avenue of publicity used to arouse the American Citizen to take action. They aren't anxious to be brought before the courts of public opinion, which is the strongest weapon we have.

The Gold Dust Twins of Plantation Interests

Another Rev. J. Abner Sage has recently appeared on the Arkansas scene. This time his face is as black as his predecessor's heart. P. R. Gibson, Negro minister reputed to be the editor of the Memphis Bulletin religious journal, has been lecturing in Arkansas in the interests of the plantation owners. This Black Judas Iscariot boasts publicly that all the "Better Citizens" the planters, are his friends. He advises Negro workers to stay away from the Union, saying that the planters are their good friends and that they are giving the sharecropper and farm worker a square deal.

Both Negro and white farm workers are not so easily fooled these days. They don't forget men who sully their calling by taking sides with the parasites who rob them. However, we are glad to say that there are few such rascals as Sage and Gibson, The Gold Dust Twins of the Plantation Interests. There are other ministers, both black and white, who dare follow in their master's footsteps and take the part of the oppressed and down-trodden. Workers will never forget men like Ward Rodgers, a Methodist minister, who went to jail for what he knew was right or E. B. McKinney, A. B. Brookins and dozens of other Negro Ministers who lead the struggles of their people from day to day. They will remember Howard Kester, a minister, who fed and clothed hundreds of poor people last Spring when the planters were driving them from their homes. These men are worthy followers of the Carpenter of Nazareth.

Organizer Kidnapped

J. E. Cameroon, organizer for the S.T.F.U., while speaking to an audience of over 200 workers near Heth, Arkansas, November 18th was visited by three plantation thugs. The three men demanded to know if Cameroon was telling their labor about their rights to parity money and bale tags under the AAA contracts. Cameroon promptly replied that he hadn't "gotten to that yet," but he certainly intended to do so.

These yellow cowards immediately began to abuse Mr. Cameroon. They dragged him from the platform, put him in their car and drove to Forrest City. There they aroused the Sheriff of St. Francis County and told him they wanted Cameroon locked up. Then the Sheriff, on questioning these men, found out that Cameroon had been brought in for organizing labor, he ordered them to immediately return our organizer to the place they had picked him up; and in the future to keep their hands off of the men of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. Upon Cameroon's return the meeting had already broken up, but not before the workers had organized a strong Union Local.

The names of the men who made up the gang are C. F. Tyson, Melvin Wilkie and Guy McGruder. One is a mail carrier, one a deputy sheriff and the other a plantation owner. Union attorneys are bringing suit against these parties, and the mail carrier being under the Civil Service Rules and Regulations is in grave danger of losing his job for his activity.

Lawyer Assaulted by Planters

Mr. J. O. Boomer, Memphis attorney, was employed by a group of sharecroppers to represent them in an attempt to get a fair settlement of their claims against some planters of St. Francis County. Upon his arrival he was met by a gang of planters who proceeded to threaten his life. Mr. Boomer has no connection whatever with the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union.

RESETTLEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Several months ago Mr. C. J. Capt of the Rural Rehabilitation Administrations which is now a part of the Resettlement Administration was in this section, and at his suggestion officials of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union began a survey to ascertain the choice of sharecroppers and tenants as to farming methods. A simple set of questions was made out. This was sent out and the answers were tabulated from 869 blanks which were returned. No preliminary educational work was made along these lines.

The continuation of the present sharecropping system with the addition of written contracts and honest book-keeping was favored by only 4.8% of the replies. Many of the questionnaires bore statements scrawled on the margin:—"we are tired of this sharecropping business," another would "like to keep on sharecropping, but not with Mr. Atkins."

The second plan was a government ownership of land with rent in accordance with variation in prices of cash crops. This plan embodied the old time populist position "Use and Occupancy of Land, sole title thereof." This method was the first choice of 19% and the second choice of 55.8%. These answers are surprising especially in so much as they are given by people who have in the past been considered as the most backward of all American Citizens.

The third plan was the purchase of small farms with 20 to 30 years to pay with "individual ownership and every man for himself." 66.6% favored it as first choice. Only 21% selected it as second choice. This proposal is in line with the Bankhead-Jones Bill now pending in Congress.

The fourth plan had to do with co-operative farms and the answers of people who had never before heard of this method, much less seen it in operation were surprising. 9% favored the Collective or Co-operative Farm as first choice.

The above results indicate that even the backward southern workers in the cotton fields are on the move. The proposed Bankhead Jones Act with its belated attempt to create an American peasantry as a bulwark for reaction even though it is adopted will prove unsuccessful, due to the advancing progress in the form of improved machinery for the production of cotton and educational work now being carried on by such organizations as the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union.

GOOD OL' PETE

By Covington Hall

Slufot Sam en his gal, Lou,
Rode up dar on er kangaroo;
Dey rode up dar, ez sho' as fate,
Straight up dar ter de Pearly Gate;
Dey knock en knock, 'twel ol' man Pete
Came hurrin' down de Golden Street;
En den dey say: "Am you de Saint,
Is you who says who's in ur aint?"
Pete look at Sam, he look at Lou,
En lakwaz at de kangaroo;
En den he say, "Well! Howdydoo!
Whut kin we all do fo' you?"
Den dis dey 'low: "We's sick uv sin;
We wants ter know kin we git in?
We's done our sheer down dar on Earth;
We's hoed de cotton frum our birth;
We's paid mo' rent en intres', too,
Dan Gawd hissef kin count fo' you;
We's wucked en scraped, en don't know yet
How much we's in de landlord's debt;
We's all wore out, we sho' is Pete;
We'd lak er house on Easy Street."
Den Pete he say, "Dat sho' wuz hell!
Walk right in en res' er spell."

Author's note: The Slufot Sams are not numbered among the Negroes alone, but also among White, Mexicans, etc..

Dedicated To Heroes of The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union

In July, 1934 G. A. Nunnally was elected chairman of the first local of the S.T.F.U. Seventeen Negro and white sharecroppers met at the old broken down school-house known as Sunnyside near the deep dark Marlin Swamps, south of the little town of Tyrone, Arkansas, to discuss their common problem. A Union was born that night, and it was chiefly due to Nunnally's handling of that first meeting that it came into existence. The wilder element, persons who were bitter at conditions they could not understand, wanted to organize a gang to ride the roads and visit the planters. Solid men like Alvin Nunnally steered the organization in the right course. They insisted that it be legal and chartered under the laws of the land. Moderation won.

A Union was born.

Quiet and unassuming, Nunnally refused the place as president when the organization was set up formally. He was content to become vice president. Night after night, following hard days in the cotton fields, Alvin Nunnally went from place to place spreading the Union. He, with other leaders, faced mobs unafraid. His sane counsel was always appreciated. "Go slow, boys", he advised the hot heads, "A Union isn't built in a day." When the first National Convention was held, Nunnally refused to accept a nomination for president or for his old place as vice president.

"The Union is now on solid ground," he said, "and someone else should serve. I will just be a member." He was driven from the land for his activity in organizing the Union. Others might have complained, but not Nunnally. If any one person deserves the title "The Founder of the S.T.F.U." it is Alvin Nunnally.

Mississippi County, Arkansas has always been a storm center. Several meetings have been broken up in this place. The population of the Community is largely Negro. Here Powers Hapgood had a meeting broken up by plantation thugs, here Norman Thomas, the good friend of the sharecropper, faced a mob of planters last March, and here too lives a small wiry Negro preacher who went out organizing plantation after plantation under the very eyes of the bosses who were looking for him day after day. He avoided the highways and roads traveling through the swamps, and fields, slipping from cabin to cabin carrying the message that the Union still lived. Night after night at the height of the terror, the night riders rode the highway and stopped at the lane leading to his little cabin. They hesitated to drive up, there was no way for the cowardly thugs to ride past Webb's cabin, as he lived at the end of the lane. For several weeks he lay at his cabin window watching the squads of cars, some time as many as a hundred in a gang. Held tightly to his old single barrel shot gun, loaded with one shell of bird-shot. The lone shell was the only one on the place and he waited patiently determined to sell his life as dearly as possible. Soon the Union perfected its lines underground and life was again comparatively safe.

NEWS FLASH

The New AAA Cotton production contract, for the next four years has just been announced from Washington, D. C. Payments to share croppers and tenants have been raised to 25% of the total, and such payments may be made direct to the real producers of cotton. There appears to be a joker in the new deck though, a provision for a Trusteeship, or a "Joint Payee" which may allow the landlord the privilege of handling croppers and tenants money. A complete review of the new contract will be published in the next issue of the Sharecroppers Voice. This will be out about January 1st. Get your subscription in early and don't miss a copy.

"BUYING FARMS"

An article in the self-styled "South's Greatest Newspaper" by one George Morris, one of the editors, takes Mr. Rex Tugwell of the Department of Agriculture to task for proposing to buy farms for 1,000 sharecroppers under the Resettlement Administration's program, and hints that this drop in the bucket handed the sharecropper isn't what it is supposed to be. Seldom if ever, we agree with Geo. Morris and we don't exactly see eye to eye with him on this.

His article contains statements of half truths twisted around to suit the occasion, for Morris is the most persistent defender of the Plantation System in the south. He continually carries on propaganda through the columns of his paper designed to confuse the issues, dragging in the race question and drawing the Red-Herring across the lines without regard to either truth or common sense.

This article states that the process of buying farms has been going on for the past 100 years. It is half true, change in ownership of land is always going on. Honest men who attempt to run plantations on a basis of fairness find themselves driven to the wall and less scrupulous landlords take their places. Tenants who by hook or crook manage to save enough to make a payment on some land in the past have changed their status. But we need only look at the U. S. Census reports as to the increase in tenantry in the cotton producing states to see that that trend is by no means toward the buying of land by the actual farmers. More farmers become tenants and croppers each year. Cases of landlords selling land to tenants who have saved a few dollars are rare these days, but we need only to look at the conditions under which a tenant may purchase land to see really what happens. Companies such as Chapman Dewey Co. and the Singer Sewing Machine Company in Poinsett County, Arkansas, are excellent examples of this. A cropper is given a contract over a period of years agreeing to pay a high price for cut-over, unimproved land at a high interest rate. The terms of these contracts place the potential owner in a worse condition than even the sharecropper for he must make certain improvements, gin his cotton at the gin designated by the land company, and turn the cotton over to them for sale at whatever price they see fit to allow. Further, a condition embodied in the Singer Co. Contracts makes the tenant agree that there will be no entertainment or other meetings at his home which aren't approved by the company. The above terms are slavery outright just as sharecropping is.

We have on file case after case of tenants who attempted to buy their land, one case we recall well. Mr. W. A. Steadman of near Trumann contracted with the Singer Company to buy 80 acres. He cleared this up, built a home, a good barn, owned his tools and stock and was on his way to becoming a small farm owner. One year the crop was short, he offered partial payment to the Company and was told to let it ride until the next year. They refused to accept the payment and the next year Mr. Steadman and a large group on the Singer Camp found that the gin where they were having cotton ginned was short weighing them, giving a bad turn-out. They refused to gin at the Company Gin. The entire group was turned out of their homes—all because they refused to be robbed. The courts held the contract legal. This with variations is the story of those who try to buy land. They are turned out, they lose their tools and stock, they become sharecroppers or casual day laborers again. Back in the same old rut.

The Resettlement Administration's proposal to resettle 1,000 tenants is of no consequence. It isn't even a drop in the bucket for there are over 2,000,000 tenants in the South alone. Mr. Morris need not become excited about this threat to the system of slavery he so admires. The idea of allowing tenants to purchase land with forty years to pay for it is unsound. The only solution to the problem of tenantry is the

Union Makes Great Progress in Oklahoma

In Muskogee County, Oklahoma, stronghold of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union of the Southwest, members are continuing the splendid work which was begun over a year ago. Several new organizations have been set up within the past 90 days. One of these a part time workers' Union in Muskogee which has a large membership has 137 applicants waiting for initiation at their meeting December 2nd. The County Union is functioning well and will make its report early this month. All of the organizations are working on the pay as you go basis. In Wagoner County several new locals have recently been organized. A Negro local at Tallahassee is exceptionally strong. In Marshall County all of the locals which joined the S.T.F.U. in a body after the A. F. and F. L. was dissolved are active. A County Central Council will be set up the first week in December. There are in all 1,800 members in this county alone. Bryan County has 17 units that will soon report on their activities.

The above report was sent in by Odis L. Sweeden of Muskogee, Okla. member of the Executive Council, who was unable to get to the Arumann meeting because of injuries received in an accident.

Sharecroppers Take Notice

A number of complaints in regard to settlements of claims against planters have been taken up by the Arkansas Labor Department this fall. They have settled some claims for Union members involving several thousand dollars. A number of such cases are now pending. Every Union member is notified that under the Arkansas Labor Laws a sharecropper is held to be a farm laborer and has a laborer's lien on his crop until his wages are settled. This applies only to croppers, and tenants who pay a certain portion of their crops in as rent. Cash renters have a different standing. These laws of Arkansas have been disregarded in the past due to the fact that most people did not know that a sharecropper was entitled to protection under them. We want every sharecropper and tenant in Arkansas to know that he has a Laborer's Lien on his Crop and can force a settlement if unjustly withheld. Pass the information on to others.

UNION ADOPTS FORM OF MODEL CONTRACT

Continued From Page 1
ment have indicated that they are ready to make a fair and reasonable contract with members of the Union. Landholders will find that workers who are assured that they will be justly dealt with will be better farmers. Those who sign this contract will find that their labor troubles will vanish for the year 1936. Many have found in the past year that changing from one group of union members to another is not practical.

Complete Abolition of the damnable system, a system that damns 5,000,000 white workers and 3,500,000 Negroes.

Sharecropping combines the worst features of capitalist exploitation and the old feudal system. Modern capitalist exploitation reduces Negro workers to a slavery more terrible than chattel slavery, and should be abolished. We need a new Homestead Law which would make it impossible to own land for speculation and exploitation. The editors of the Voice do not favor the allotment of 40 acres and a mule to every sharecropper. We seek not to create an American peasantry, but rather to build a new system of co-operative society in which all who are willing and able to work will be the joint owners of the land which they use and will work with improved machinery, designed to lessen the working hours of all. Such a law is now being drawn.

The Sharecroppers' Voice

"The Voice of the Disinherited"

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New Sharecroppers' Voice

With this issue the Sharecroppers' Voice becomes a printed newspaper. Nine months ago a few hundred copies were laboriously gotten out on a very small mimeograph. The number has since then grown to a total of 5,000 copies, and it has become an impossible task to get it out on time by mimeograph. Our next issue will be the Convention number (see the announcement on the front page), and after January first, 1936 the Voice will be published every other week—provided we get your support. The Voice is our best organizer, and persons who will make donations of money to our newspaper will be more than pleased with the results. Lets go, everybody, let the Voice of the Disinherited be heard throughout all America.

TERROR IN ARKANSAS

A new wave of terrorism is rising in Northeastern Arkansas. Organizers are being kidnapped and beaten, and lawyers run out of the country. This is in our opinion, due largely to the fact that the Union is being extended into new territory and is showing its strength. There is never oppression or ruthlessness on the part of the ruling classes until a serious threat is made to disturb their particular method of plundering the workers. It may always be expected in a land where workers are given less consideration than beasts. Planters direct the dirty work which is carried out by bullies and cowards of the worst sort. Most of them would not dare go on a raid unless they were either drunk or doped. In older territories the Union has had to undergo this experience, fighting every step of the way. The best defense possible against such actions is the exposure and publishing of names and addresses of guilty parties. They fear this pitiless publicity which puts them "on the spot." Violence on the part of the Union men is unthinkable, we have a record to uphold. Every new Union man must live up to it, and uphold the honor of the S.T.F.U. For every man beaten or dragged from the platform by a mob, a thousand new members are made, sympathy for us is created with the public, new friends are made and the planters make more enemies. A defense unit must be set up in every organization which will function smoothly. We can then beat them because they are cowardly, yellow and afraid!

Men are being framed on various charges. They are jailed for drunkenness and for stealing their own corn. Practically every case is obviously a frame-up. Local Defense Committees must act on these cases. We absolutely will not defend violators of the law or guilty parties. Union men must take pains to avoid even the appearance of evil. Let the boss class tremble because of the power of organized workers.

DEDICATED TO THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

Hon. Henry A. Wallace

Plumb crazy at "over production"

The food destroying Cuss,
Throw Wallace in the River
And save the pigs for Us.

H. H. Lewis, Missouri.

Pay Your Union Dues

Every one knows that to carry on any kind of business money must be had. Your Union organization is your business. It cannot function unless members of the Union pay the small dues which are set. They are low because we are all poor people and we have poor ways. Your Union is exactly what you make it. It takes dimes to make your organization work. Now is the time of the year when sharecroppers, tenants and farm laborers have a few dimes in their ragged overall pockets, cotton picking is just about over. Your Union must be supported! Now is the time to pay your year's dues, later on in the spring and summer months it will be hard to raise even one month's dues. Pay them now and have it off your hands. A special offer has been made to members of the Union, a combination price of one years dues, value \$1.20 and one years subscription to the Sharecroppers' Voice, value \$1.00; total value \$2.20 both for \$1.50. Turn this amount in to your local Secretary, or send it direct to the Editors, Sharecroppers' Voice who will see that your local and county union receive their share of the funds.

The one who pays the fiddler is the one who calls the tune.

ABOLISH TENANTRY

The sharecropper system is an outgrowth of chattel slavery, and dooms to slow starvation, disease and misery millions of American citizens. Its effect is more terrible than the slavery of the old South. Workers both white and black are now held in bondage. Where are the abolitionists of today? The streets of Boston no longer ring with the call of Garrison and his "Liberator," "Moderation be damned—Abolish this thing." The Voice of the oppressed and exploited comes straight from the heart of the cotton fields of the Southland. A Voice which will not be stilled until oppression and exploitation are banished forever from our land.

WOMEN MUST WORK FOR STRONG UNION

Many inquiries have come in to the National office regarding the place of women in the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. With a rapidly increasing membership in women's councils a definite program of work should be planned. Women are freeing themselves from the yoke of intellectual slavery. They are thinking, studying, finding out why their children are hungry, and why their husbands are without jobs. Women are taking their places in the struggle for a better world. We look to the women for what is probably the most important work of all, that of education. Many of our members cannot read or write, but they can teach their children the value of cooperation and unity. They can do more than anyone else to break down the many barriers of hatred and prejudice which have been consciously built up by their exploiters whose interest it is to keep the people in slavery and ignorance.

The immediate need is for the women of the S.T.F.U. to work together in cooperative groups. Study clubs should be formed where the best reader of the group can read informative literature to the others. Our problems cannot be solved until they are understood. We should organize cooperative sewing groups where what material comes our way can be made into clothing for the most in need among us. So much can be done by working together that is almost impossible alone.

Another tremendously important Union work that women can engage in is that of raising funds for the defense of those men and women who are imprisoned for their activities in the Union. They can do this by giving suppers, entertainments, etc., the proceeds of which to be used for such emergencies.

When the National Convention meets on

LETTERS

Dear Sir:

The November issue of the Sharecroppers Voice has reached me out here, and has been read with interest. It is well gotten up and full of interesting matter. I wish for you all kinds of success in your work.

The "powers that be" out here are tightening down on the workers pretty rapidly now. More than 100 men and women were arrested in this state last week, because they signed a simple petition to the Governor asking for a change of Venue for the Gallup Miners. The change of Venue was granted all right, but afterwards these people were arrested and placed under bond, \$700 each (evidently charged with Contempt of Court). The indictment was returned by Judge McGhee who presided at the trial of the Miners. Every one of these people were, at the time of their arrest or had been very recently, on direct relief. I wrote this story up, but it must have been "too hot to print." What the Labor movement needs is one paper that isn't afraid to print the truth.

I am leaving this state in the near future, principally because of the extremely bad weather that usually comes during the winter months. Sometimes we have snows that reach 10 feet deep and cold that reaches 40 below, and that in treeless plains country where there are plenty of places 50 miles between houses. I think I shall return to East Texas and maybe Arkansas. One can at least find wood to make a fire with.

Yours for a Workers' World,
J. C. Thompson (Socialist and Labor Leader, sometime editor Labor papers.)
Post Texas.

Dear Sir:

I have just handed Professor Deo his Commission as an organizer for the S.T.F.U. He lives at Lubbock, and for many years was used as a court interpreter when they tried Mexicans. He is considered more fluent in Spanish than English and can beat the Mexicans talking Spanish. He has the respect of three races. Before long we will line up all the farm workers of the Plains and we will really be successful. The Farmers and Workers Union at Lubbock is still functioning and Deo is going to transfer them all to the S.T.F.U. We will get a number of new members at Tahoka Saturday and we're going to stick close until cotton chopping time comes around. We will have about 500 families in Lynn soon. I found a bundle of Rural Workers and a letter from the editor after I had already subscribed for it myself in Lubbock. We ought to urge all our members to get poll taxes paid and get ready to vote in the next elections. We want a farmers and workers party ourselves. We ought to get all the Union papers to do the same.

Fred H. Mathews,
Earle, Ark.

Dear Sir:

Just a few words. When I arrived in town Saturday evening, Peaches, (Deputy Sheriff or City Marshall) had put two of our boys in jail. They were Simon and Clayborn Bass, both Union men. He claimed they were drunk, but every one knows they were not even drinking. They were in Mr. Harry Lewis' store who also says they were not drinking. They were leaving the store and were getting in the car when the "Law" stopped them. He hit Clayborn and then Simon, and Ennis who was also with them asked to be allowed to carry Clayborn home. He told them to get in line and carried them to jail. They had to pay twenty dollars to get out of jail. There wasn't any trial. This is the way they do workers in Arkansas. We got to do something to stop this.

J. C.
Tyronza, Ark.

January 3, 4 and 5, every women's council should be represented. A program of women's work will be planned. We have too long remained in the background when important issues are at stake, we must now take our stand with the men in this struggle for decent conditions for all.